



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION**

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**Testimony of Deborah J. Fuller  
Select Committee on Children Public Hearing  
February 26, 2010**

**Senate Bill 294, An Act Concerning Documentation of Reasonable  
Efforts to Reunite a Parent with a Child and to Locate Relatives**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testify, on behalf of the Judicial Branch, on *Senate Bill 294, An Act Concerning Documentation of Reasonable Efforts to Reunite a Parent with a Child and to Locate Relatives*. The Judicial Branch is opposed to this bill because of the following concerns:

- The proposed new language in Section 1 (4)(A) conflicts with federal law. Federal law does not require the department to make reasonable efforts prior to removal of a child if there are concerns about the safety of the child. This contingency needs to be included here.
- This bill would undo the holding in *In re Jorden R*, which held that that a judge in a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) trial can find either that DCF made reasonable efforts OR that the parent was unable or unwilling to benefit from such efforts. Such a finding must be made before the court can terminate parental rights.
- Section 2(j) requires that a separate hearing be held in order for the court to find that the parent was unable or unwilling to benefit from reunification efforts. These extra hearings could require additional resources.
- The bill will shorten the duration of time a parent facing a termination of parental rights petition may have to rehabilitate, since the court may find, long before the petition is filed, that the parent was unable or unwilling to benefit from reunification efforts.

In summary, this bill would violate federal law, would not help parents, and would needlessly impose additional expenditure of time on the courts. For all these reasons, I urge the Committee not to act favorably on it.